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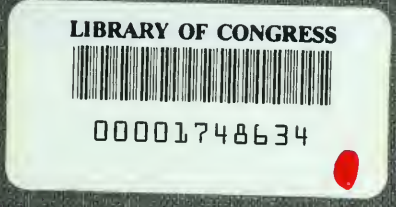

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WAR

THE ONLY MEANS OF

PRESERVING OUR NATIONALITY.

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED AT SAN JOSE, SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CAL.

JULY 4, 1864,

BY

GEORGE BARSTOW.

SAN FRANCISCO:
PRINTED BY TOWNE & BACON, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.
1864.

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ORATION

After the example of our fathers, the illustrious founders of the Republic, let us turn our thoughts to war, as the only means of preserving that liberty which was born in '76.

It is clear that the problem of the rebellion must be solved by the sword. It is the patriotic resolve of the people of the United States to contend, in spite of every sacrifice, for the maintenance of that noble Government which embodies the hopes of the free throughout the civilized world.

Of all the spectacles presented to our view, through the telescope of history, there is none so sublime as that of a great nation contending for its existence, against foes who act upon the atrocious maxim that success in villainy is a justification of it. That spectacle is actually presented to our own eyes by this Republic, and while thousands are expecting every day to see the national credit perch upon the standard of victory, and are disappointed if they do not, and are alarmed at the national debt and the fluctuations in the currency; and while the timid are beginning to despond, and the disaffected to murmur, and even the patriotic to have misgivings, it is instructive to turn and see what other nations have done, and then by comparing ourselves with them to ask if what man has done man may not do. Thus by a view of other nations we shall see that this Republic has not put forth a tenth of her strength nor a tenth of her endurance; and that tenfold greater burdens of war have been laid upon other nations, and those nations have triumphed over them, and renewed their strength like the eagle.

By the common consent of nations, the United States rank

as one of the four great powers of the earth; the other three being England, France, and Russia. Let us raise the veil and institute a comparison of nations. We shall find that the resources of a vigorous people are increased by the necessity that calls them forth. We shall find that a mighty nation, profoundly engaged in the arts of peace, is slow to take on armor, and will be uniformly defeated in the beginning of a war, and as uniformly successful at last. We may infer that this will be especially so with the people of the Northern States, because their works of peace have been so grand and so absorbing. But as the contest goes on, they will bend at last to war the same energies which have spread the triumphs of their commerce from the equator to the poles; and then victory will crown their efforts; but not in a day, nor a year; for they cannot come out at once from the harvests of peace and descend to the harvest of death. They will always be the last to go out upon the war path; but being out, they will not be the first to come back. We shall find, also, that whenever a nation is driven to the ordeal of battle, if it fails to stand the test, its glories must end. Let us see how these positions are supported by history.

England commenced her great contest with France on the third day of February, 1793, thirteen days after the execution of Louis XVI, and closed it on the seventh of July, 1815, when the victorious armies of the allies, headed by Wellington, entered Paris in triumph. They came from the field of Waterloo. Thus, with trifling intervals of peace, England waged war twenty-two years. It has assumed the name of "the twenty years' war." Every student of history knows that during this whole period England kept her foes off from her own soil, and was all the time growing rich. There is no reason why the same cannot be done in our own country.

But let us see how England multiplied her resources and redoubled her efforts. The year 1793 was the first year of the war, and the revenue raised for that year, by tax and loan, was a little over twenty-four millions sterling. By land, she had forty-six thousand men in arms in Europe, and ten thousand in Asia. At sea, she had in commission eighty-five ships of the line. The contest rolled on, and year by year the power of the nation rose. In 1813, after she had been at war over nineteen years, she raised by direct

taxation twenty millions sterling, by indirect taxation forty millions more, and borrowed thirty-nine millions at a fraction over five per cent. interest. She had eight hundred thousand men upon a war footing in Europe, and two hundred thousand in Asia, and they were most of them volunteers. One thousand and three ships of war bore the cross of St. George. She had two hundred and thirty-one ships of the line in service, and she sent a hundred thousand men upon the continent and supported them there, and was all the while lending money to her allies. She at the same time kept up her sinking fund to over fifteen millions, and expended annually six millions for the support of the poor. For convenience of estimating in round numbers, we may call a pound sterling, five dollars. Multiplying each of these numbers by five and adding all, we get with sufficient exactness the stupendous aggregate of these expenditures. In the first year of the war, they were one hundred and twenty millions of dollars, and in the nineteenth, six hundred and ninty-five millions, or nearly two millions per day. In 1815, two years later, when England nerved herself for a final struggle, she showed no sign of exhaustion. Parliament voted that year, to the navy eighteen millions sterling, to the army twenty-four millions sterling, and for ordnance extraordinary, three millions eight hundred thousand pounds. With these large sums she supported two hundred and seven thousand regular soldiers; besides, she had enrolled eighty thousand militia and three hundred and forty thousand local militia, in all, six hundred and fifty thousand warriors; and she had in commission fifty-eight ships of the line, the largest class of war vessels, besides innumerable smaller ones. She gave away that year enormous subsidies to her allies.

To Russia	£3,241,910
To Austria	1,796,220
To Prussia	2,382,823
To Hanover	206,590
To Spain	147,333
To Portugal	100,000
To Sweden	521,061
To Italy and the Netherlands	78,152
To the minor powers	1,724,000
For miscellaneous subsidies	837,134
In all	£11,035,232

The population of great Britain, at that time, did not exceed eighteen millions; and from this we may see that the people of the United States have hardly yet begun to put forth their strength, either in men or money. England had her reverses in the field and her traitors to contend with at home, as we have, and her grumblers. In 1804, when she had become the acknowledged leader of the allies; when her expenditures were fifty-three millions sterling; when she had three hundred thousand men in the field; when her naval forces numbered one hundred thousand men, with eighty-three ships of the line, and three hundred and forty frigates, and this after ten years of strenuous efforts, and when all must admit that she was waging war in a manner worthy of her greatness and of her ancient renown; yet because she sustained great reverses in the field, the murmurs of her malcontents became so loud that a revolution in politics ensued, as complete as if the Union party of the United States should now be defeated at the polls, and on the twelfth of May, in that year, the ministry resigned. But England went forward with open purse, sword in hand, and triumphed alike over the disaffected, the traitor, and the foreign foe. England, however, entered upon that war under an enormous load of preëxisting debt. We commenced ours almost free from debt. England relied for external revenue upon her commerce and her colonial possessions, some of which were profitable and others not. We have millions of acres of public land, valuable and not yet disposed of. We have undeveloped mines which may surpass the riches of Ophir and Havilah. England had a population of eighteen millions, and in the loyal States we have not much less. England emerged from her long war the richest nation in the world, and with the exception perhaps of Russia, the most powerful. And when we see that she is more than any other a commercial nation, and that during most of this time she was excluded from the commerce of the continent by the Berlin and Milan decrees, and yet that she fought thus through a twenty years' war, in the latter part of which she expended from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty millions sterling annually, and came out victor, we naturally ask how she was enabled thus to contend and thus to triumph. By no factitious cause, certainly. The real cause is to be found in her industrial

national character, her free constitution, her long-established habits of industry, and her immense natural advantages, commercial and manufacturing. These prepared the vast means of producing this astonishing result—means which no war could exhaust, so long as it was kept off from her own soil. Most of the advantages which she had, we also possess; a Government more free than hers, education more general by far, and the same habits of order and industry. We have an agriculture vastly greater than hers—commercial and manufacturing advantages hardly less. If we can keep the enemy out of the free States, we can carry on war for forty years, and be richer at the close than at the beginning of it; richer not in money alone, but in the development of that noble constancy in the government, and that heroic spirit in the people, which makes them surmount difficulties and bear burdens which no other age or country endured, and which earns the applause of the world by pouring out their blood and their wealth in the cause of mankind. While I detest the conduct of a portion of the English aristocracy in regard to our contest, I honor the prowess and patience of the English people through that tremendous conflict; and in all history I find few things more admirable than the calm and stubborn resolve of England to conquer or perish.

Let us now view France, the chief antagonist of England in that war. At the outset we are presented with the astonishing fact that the levies of French soldiers from 1793 to 1813, amounted to more than four millions of men; and thus they are divided among the years:

1793	1,500,000
1798	200,000
1799	200,000
1801	30,000
1805	140,000
1806	80,000
1807	80,000
1808	240,000
1809	76,000
1810	160,000
1811	120,000
1812	237,000
1813	1,040,000
Total	4,103,000

It is true, that some of these levies did not reach the field. But the list of them shows us the amazing efforts by which France confronted the giant power which we have just reviewed. To meet the expenses of these levies, she resorted to the issue of paper money far more freely than we have done. Nor does France or the United States differ in this respect from other nations. In fact, paper money is the currency of all the wars of modern times. The reason is obvious. Sudden calls for provisions, clothing, and munitions of war, sweep the treasury empty, and the nation, not having the money, substitutes its promises. Like an individual, it gives its notes. This is the paper currency of the Government. It is the offspring of necessity. France, a not indifferent beholder of our struggle, carried on her own entirely with a paper currency. On the seventeenth of June, 1790, before a hostile foot had touched her soil, she issued eight hundred millions of assignats, the "greenbacks" of France. In 1794, she had fifteen hundred millions afloat, and they were worth but ten cents on the dollar. She at that time subsisted six hundred and thirty-six thousand non-combatants by rations at the public expense. In 1792, her war tax was graduated so as to produce to the treasury forty millions sterling, or two hundred millions of dollars. She had in 1794, fourteen armies in the field, and the expenses of the war had risen to forty millions of dollars per month, which is one-and-one-third millions per day, about the same as our own. The only way for the French Government to make headway against these expenses was to issue paper money, and the only basis for it was the confiscated property of the realm, which amounted to thirty-five hundred millions of dollars, and consisted of houses, lands, and movables. The paper had a forced circulation, being payable everywhere, to the Government as well as for it. Towards the close of the year, it sunk to eight-and-one-third cents on the dollar, and the timid supposed that national bankruptcy was impending. At that time, however, the victorious banner of Napoleon suddenly appearing on the eastern slopes of the Alps, enabled the French Government to adopt the policy of making war support war, and from that time France began to live upon her enemies. If we ever obtain from victory the power to carry into effect that vigorous system of warfare, as soon as it is commmenced, we shall be met with a cry from

the Copperheads that it is unconstitutional. But let us not turn aside from the direct course. Constitutions are instruments made for times of peace. In war they are suspended, from the necessity of the case, when they interfere with those military operations which are carried on for their preservation; and when you hear a man talk of constitutional impediments to the prosecution of this war, you may know that he is a constitutional villain, and if he does not betray his country it will be for want of an opportunity.

Let us now look at Russia. The first great enemy that the Russians encountered in war was the Swedes under Charles XII. In a series of battles the Russians were defeated and greatly discouraged. But as they gained in discipline daily, the tide turned at last, and they wound up the contest on the field of Pultowa by the total overthrow of the Swedes and the firm establishment of the Muscovite empire. This was in the year 1700. Let us look at Russia in 1812. In that year Napoleon invaded her at the head of four hundred and fifty thousand men. Never had modern Europe seen such an army, or war on so gigantic a scale. The sabres of forty thousand dragoons met each other and clashed, on the battle field of Smolensko. At Borodino, all along the front of Bagrations' line, there rose a breastwork of the dead and dying. The conqueror, however, entered Moscow. Yet this tide of disaster was so entirely reversed that the French were driven from Moscow, and the Cossacks entered Paris. This was not because of the snows of Russia. That it was, is the common opinion, but it is erroneous. It was because the Russians showed in their very defeats the elements of final success. It was persevering, determined valor, gaining in discipline every day, and showing in this, as in every other case, that an uncorrupted nation suddenly called to arms, is certain to be defeated in the first battles and equally certain to win at last.

Go back to Hannibal and the Carthaginians. Mark that series of victories which he gained over the Romans, from the day he crossed the Alps till he encamped within sight of Rome; the conquering Romans losing every battle. Yet this tide was so completely turned that Hannibal was driven out of Italy; the Carthaginians were everywhere routed, and the Roman general closed the campaign with a battle in which he took twenty thousand prisoners and left

twenty thousand more of the enemies of Rome dead on the field. From that day Carthage was doomed. But I will not multiply illustrations. The counterparts of Manassas, Great Bethel, Lexington, Leesburg, Fredericksburg, and Petersburg, are found in the history of every warlike nation of ancient or modern times. France, impetuously gallant, has had many of them. England, the most cautious and firm of warlike nations, has more than one instance in point. Venice, Macedonia, and Turkey, are not wanting in them.

A single defeat in a pitched battle, or even a series of them, forms no basis for a conclusion as to how great is the capacity of a nation for war. Russia never appeared so great as on the morning when fifteen thousand of her people lay bleeding on the field of Borodino. Rising from defeat, as the embodied spirit of patriotism, she seized the torch with her own hands, and made her capital a sea of fire. From that hour it was apparent that Russia was invincible. Did Athens ever appear so great as at the moment when her vales were drenched in blood, her fields desolated, consternation brooding over her citizens, and her last resource the ships of her merchants? It was then that the invincible valor of her people, bursting forth like the dayspring from on high, dealt the Persian empire a blow under which it reeled and fell. Was it not after the terrible disaster of Cannae, which brought destruction to the very gates of Rome, that the still uncorrupted Roman roused himself like a giant from sleep and blotted out Carthage? If any man thinks that courage and endurance will not preserve this nation, let him correct his impressions from the storehouse of history. There he will find, not only that the great sacrifices which courage and endurance impel a nation to make for its life, have been successful, but that they have always been worth all that they cost. So it will be with us. Ultimately, too, if we are true to ourselves, some general will arise, or perhaps has already appeared, capable of pointing out to our brave battalions the road to victory, and of leading the way. Let us not despair of the Republic. It is well with a nation when it can be said of it with truth, that its first efforts in a war were its least successful ones.

Looking back over the history of the world, we find that a time has come to almost every nation, when it had to be put to the wager of battle, as a test of its power to maintain itself in arms. Greece

was put to this test successively at Marathon, at Thermopylæ, and at Platea. On each occasion she stood the test, and her glory and power went on increasing. But after a period of debasement, she was again put to the test at Cherronæa, and failed; and after that her history is a case of melancholy decline. Rome was put to the same test on a score of bloody fields, and as long as she met it successfully, she remained mistress of the world. But the day came when she was put to trial by the same ordeal in the first Gothic invasion, and she could not stand the test; and so history has recorded the decline and fall of the Roman empire. Venice exerted the same power at first; and became, in name and in fact, the queen of the Adriatic. But she afterwards failed to exert it at Constantinople, and was overthrown by the Turks whom she despised. It makes no difference to the nation being tried, whether her enemies are from within or without. It is all the same to us whether a hundred thousand men in arms have landed on our shores from abroad, or a hundred thousand have gathered from the dismal swamps of the South. In either case, there is a foe to be vanquished, or to vanquish us.

The only condition upon which a nation like ours can exist is, that it possesses and will exert the force necessary to crush any force that can be brought against it, from within or without. This is the simple proposition which must be made good in arms, in order for the existence of any government. The nation that cannot do this, will be extinguished so soon as the great powers make up their minds that the farce of its nationality had better be considered as "played out." Such will be our position, unless we can crush the Confederacy by force. If, after the repulses we have sustained, we settle up the controversy, the world will see—and what is worse, it will be true—that we receded from the contest through fear of the result; through distrust of our ability to destroy our enemies and repeople their section, which all must see that it is our true policy to do, if we can. Then the word will pass from lip to lip among the nations, that this people of the United States, so boastful and so free—this people that has assumed to be the regenerator of the world, could not quell a conspiracy of its own malcontents at home. How long after that can we exist? Only so much time as is necessary for our riches to tempt the cupidity of some pow-

erful nation. Our remaining history will be like the history of Carthage after the battle of Zama, or of Athens after the battle of Syracuse, or of Greece, taken as a whole, after the battle of Cheronæa, or of Rome after the first Gothic invasion,—a succession of dying throes and shortening gasps, the pulse of national life growing fainter and fainter, till it ceases to beat. Then we, who have gloried in the symbol of the eagle, shall be like the eagle struck in mid air by a fatal dart. That he is to fall and die, is certain. The only question is, how long he will quiver upon his pinions—with what writhings he will descend from the skies, and to how much of agony and humiliation the proud bird will be subjected, before he stretches himself upon the plain and expires.

The military disasters which we have met with in the last three years, find their counterpart in every modern nation capable of conducting war on a great scale. France, with a population of thirty millions, fought through the campaigns of 1791, '92, and '93 with a series of the most disheartening defeats. In 1792, she took the field with four armies, amounting in the aggregate to 193,000 men. In the north, Rochambeau was at the head of forty thousand infantry and eight thousand cavalry. In the center, La Fayette was stationed with forty-five thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry. In the east, Luckner with thirty-five thousand infantry rested upon the Rhine; and in the south, Montesquieu, with fifty thousand men, stretched his line along the Pyrenees and the Rhone. These armies were the offspring of national enthusiasm, and were all unsuccessful. Lafayette was surprised and defeated at Maubeuge. Luckner, after a severe check, was driven back to the frontier. Rochambeau and Montesquieu were alike unfortunate, not from the cowardice of the men; for afterwards, when they had a General to lead them, they became the heroes of Austerlitz, Wagram, and Marengo. As if to fill the cup of national woe to overflowing, the dreadful insurrection of La Vendee then broke out, which was not suppressed till torrents of blood flowed, and one of the most flourishing cities of France was laid in ruins. In 1794, the fourth year of the war, all was changed; and that campaign was the most memorable in her annals. During all this time, France had been looking for a general. That year, she found one in the person of Napoleon Bonaparte. She had lacked unanimity among her people.

That year she found it. She had been in want of munitions of war; her treasury empty, her hospitals filled. That year the star of Napoleon rose upon the troubled night of disaster, and brought back victory to her banner; and then her armies were supplied from the districts which they conquered.

There is not a perfect parallel between France and ourselves, for the first three years of these two wars, because the Generals of the Federal forces have not always been unsuccessful. Some of them have gained important advantages. Some have won victories. But long ere this the war would have closed, had it not been for the political party at the North, which is led by such men as the Seymours and the Woods. They are fully identified with the traitors of the South. They know that if the nation succeeds in the war, they are politically dead. But if defeat or base compromise brings peace, they hope to be able, with the help of their Southern allies, to revive again the power of the pro-slavery democracy. Hence, with fiendish ingenuity they plot for the defeat of the Union armies. They have spies in all the Federal camps, and the evident readiness of our foes to meet almost every military movement which we have made, shows that they have been apprised of them in advance. The Northern Copperheads have given them the information. Their hopes of power and plunder are founded upon national calamity and disgrace. To effect their infamous schemes, they resort to every subterfuge which the most devilish art can devise. To undermine the faith of the people in the solvency of their Government, they point to the national debt, and proclaim that the abyss of national bankruptcy is opening before us. Let us look into it, then. The nation owes to day seventeen hundred and fifty millions of dollars. But we estimate the financial condition of a man not alone by what he owes, but also by what he has to pay it with, and by what he receives and expends. One man may be poor, and owe nothing. Another may owe thousands, and yet be rich. The same is true of nations. If we should hear that Norway had borrowed fifty millions, we should say, that nation has shouldered a heavy load. But when Russia borrows fifty millions, it is a mere bagatelle, because she has vast tracts of new land, and boundless resources. She has a great agriculture, and a growing commerce. She has risen to a very high pitch of prosperity and grandeur. She

is every day subduing the forest, and building steamships and railroads. Though populous in some sections, she is more towering in point of area than in numbers. In fact, she is a country essentially the same as our own—young, strong, and growing. She has a population of seventy-three millions, on an area of eight and one-third millions of square miles. Like us, she has a long seaboard, extending, by sea and ocean, more than twenty-five thousand miles—a distance equal to the circumference of the earth. Her land frontier is over nine thousand miles long. The greatest length of the empire is nine thousand six hundred and eighty-one miles, and the greatest breadth is two thousand six hundred and twenty-eight miles. Like us, her increase has been rapid. She did not emerge from barbarism till late in the seventeenth century; and in 1722, we find her population was fourteen millions; in 1815, forty-five millions; in 1825, fifty-five millions; in 1851, sixty-four millions; and now, in 1864, it is seventy-three millions.

What is a debt of seventeen hundred and fifty millions of dollars to a nation like the Russians, with such an area, and such resources? It would make Switzerland or Sweden insolvent; but it would be nothing to Russia; and it will not sink the American Union. A careful estimate, based upon previous growth, shows that in 1870 the taxable property of the Atlantic, Middle, and Western States, will amount to thirty-five thousand millions of dollars; and in 1880 it will reach the enormous aggregate of eighty thousand millions. Thus, for seventeen hundred and fifty millions, which the nation owes to-day, she will have eighty thousand millions to pay it with, sixteen years from this time. An estimate of the increase of population, not less carefully made, shows that in the year 1880, the population of the same States will be fifty-six millions; so that the national debt of to-day, provided it does not increase, will rest in 1880 upon the shoulders of fifty-six millions of people, worth eighty thousand millions of dollars, and it can be paid without taxing the people at large up to the rate of taxation in San Francisco for the present fiscal year.

The unthinking and the pusillanimous are startled by the figures which the reptile Copperheads of the North arrange before their eyes, to alarm the avarice of misers, and shake the public credit. But an examination of reliable data, shows the unbounded ability

of the nation to meet all her liabilities, and to emerge from this war, even if it should last twenty years, one of the richest nations in the world. In view of the powerful navy, evoked by this contest, it is not an absurd conjecture, that at its close it will give to American merchants the lead in the world's commerce, and make New York to be what London has been, the center of the wealth of the globe. It is a memorable fact that in twenty-five years after the close of the twenty years' war, Great Britain trebled her exports, doubled her tunnage, and increased her population by millions. The resources of vigorous nations are developed with redoubled rapidity, by necessity. They increase with the demand for them; and I assert, unhesitatingly, that if we can keep the foe out of the free States, we can fight for forty years, and be richer at the close than at the commencement of the war; and if the flower of the young men could reappear; if to the desolate homes of the North the loved and lost could return; if the wounds and woes, which the fiends of the Confederacy have inflicted upon the people, could be healed, the nation could afford to laugh at the bugbear of national bankruptcy. It is a fit emanation from the poisonous, rancorous reptiles of the North, who have taken the appropriate name of Copperheads. The debt that we owe, though large, is chiefly due to our own people, and it gives every creditor of the Republic a direct interest in its preservation. I am not seeking to show that a national debt is a national blessing; but only that, if the calamity of indebtedness must come upon us, for the national preservation, the country is able to pay it. Nor do I seek to show that it was a blessing to France to issue millions upon millions of assignats, nor that their depreciation was a benefit. On the contrary, the result of all this was an evil; but as a choice between that and the greater evil of national annihilation, I believe that the nation acted wisely; and so also this nation is acting wisely, though many private fortunes here, as there, will be ruined.

For the soldier of the Confederacy, who shoulders his musket and fights—for the southern-born secessionist, who hates us without knowing us, and wants to kill us because we want to save the Union, bad as his cause is, I can make some allowance. But for the miserable Judas of the North—the monster, whose heart is with the enemies of his country—the viper who was reared in a land of

freedom, and yet is false to freedom—the degraded and spiritless wretch, in whose frozen bosom burns no love for his own native land—no pride in her traditions and history—no memories, nor attachments—no fond and proud associations which make him feel that he has a country—no feeling of common cause with those who are bleeding and dying for the old fatherland—will the time never come when such detestable felons can be brought to the gallows? O, if I had the power to do what I have the will to do, I would hang all traitors; but the Northern traitor should hang the highest and the first.

There are writers who inform us that the dog is the natural servant of man, because when found wild on the central plains of Asia, if he chance to encounter a man, he comes crouching at his feet, and fawns, and affectionately licks his hand, in token of his acknowledgment that man is his master. In the same way the Copperhead of the North is the natural servant of the slave power. Wherever he finds it, he crouches and fawns before it, like the dog before his master.

The secessionist is the political brigand of the country. He is false to the Union, and he makes no other profession. But the Northern Copperhead, who talks of peace and humanity, is false to it, whatever may be his professions; and there are so many excuses arising from education, habits, and birth, that I esteem the secessionist almost a saint, compared with the Northern Copperhead —the loathsome scavenger of the Southern Confederacy.

54 W

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